

STATINTL

AI/DDA
7D02, Hqs.

DDA 78-0894

5117

3 March 1978

ADDA

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Attached is Jack Pfeiffer's Memorandum for the Record on his meeting with Mrs. Fawn Brodie and a copy of the follow-up letter he sent to her. Given the Director's interest in this meeting and his own letter to Mrs. Brodie, it may be worth sending Jack's papers forward to the O/DCI.

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STATINTL

AI/DDA [REDACTED] dc (3 Mar 78)
Distribution:
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1 - AI Chrono

STATINTL

Atts: a/s

1 March 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT : Meeting with Mrs. Fawn M. Brodie

REFERENCE : Letter for Mrs. Bernard Brodie from Stansfield
Turner, 10 February 1978

1. In response to the referenced letter, I received a call from Mrs. Fawn Brodie on 27 February 1978 and arranged for an interview with her at 1430 hours that same day. The meeting was conducted in the History Staff offices, 203 Key Building, from 1430-1630 hours.

2. Mrs. Brodie is gathering materials for use in the biography of Richard M. Nixon, and she is presently trying to establish the role, if any, that Mr. Nixon played in the Bay of Pigs operation and the impact that this experience may have had on his subsequent career. Her principal concerns can be defined as follows:

a. Nixon's role in, or knowledgeability of, the planned assassination plots against Fidel Castro at the time the Bay of Pigs operation was evolving.

b. Nixon's role in planning the Bay of Pigs and/or his knowledgeability about the plans.

c. Nixon's relations with CIA during the course of the anti-Castro effort which culminated at the Bay of Pigs.

d. The issue of Cuba in the Nixon-Kennedy TV debate during the 1960 election campaign.

3. Using briefing notes which I had prepared prior to Mrs. Brodie's visit, we covered each of the above topics and others which were precipitated during the meeting. It was apparent that Mrs. Brodie has strong anti-Nixon biases.

Whenever possible, she chose to give "worst case" interpretations to the evidence in question. In one such instance, for example, she equated the word "elimination" with "assassination;" but I suggested that equally valid evidence supported nothing more than "removal from office." In the case of the 1960 TV debates between Kennedy and Nixon, Mrs. Brodie seemed appalled that Nixon "lied" about his views on US support for the anti-Castro efforts. I pointed out, however, that this debate was still within the time frame when "plausible denial" was a realistic choice; and it presented Nixon with a Catch 22 situation. Using her own "worst case," tactic, I suggested that someone could have leaked details of the Agency's anti-Castro plans to Kennedy so that he could go one up on Nixon.

4. Despite differences of opinion, the session was conducted in a professional manner between trained historians. In response to Mrs. Brodie's question about referencing the information which I provided, I said that I would write her a personal letter suggesting how best to do this. (I told her to feel free to refer either to the letter or to her personal meeting with me as the CIA Historian. A copy of this letter is attached to this memorandum.)

5. Following the discussion, I gave Mrs. Brodie the package of unclassified documents mentioned in the DCI's 10 February letter to Mrs. Brodie; and I also suggested that she might contact General Cushman, Admiral Burke, and Gordon Gray for additional information. Further, I recommended that she check with Peter Wyden and Leslie Danoff to see if, in their unrelenting pursuit of Bay of Pigs information, they could offer any insights to her problem.

6. Mrs. Brodie appeared pleased with the discussion, and she volunteered to send me a copy of her biography on Thomas Jefferson. I was unsuccessful in dissuading her from this, but in my letter I have asked that she not send the volume.

Dr. Jack B. Pfeiffer
CIA Historian

STATINTL

Attachment:

Ltr. to Mrs. Brodie as stated.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

1 March 1978

Mrs. Fawn M. Brodie
619 Resolano Drive
Pacific Palisades, California 90272

Dear Mrs. Brodie:

As I agreed following our discussion (27 February 1978) of ex-President Nixon's role in the Bay of Pigs operation, I have reviewed my notes and I believe that the most satisfactory way for you to incorporate any information which you believe to be useful into your Nixon biography would be to cast it along the following general lines:

In the period between January and November 1960 (prior to the Presidential election), it can be established that Mr. Nixon or his aide, General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., were participants in, or attendees at, roughly two dozen meetings (including several NSC meetings) concerned with the evolution of the U. S. Government's anti-Castro effort which was assigned to CIA and which culminated at the Bay of Pigs. It also can be established that Vice President Nixon was specifically briefed by CIA representatives on its anti-Castro efforts on only one occasion during the time frame noted above -- this briefing, incidentally, was about two weeks prior to President Eisenhower's official approval of an anti-Castro plan for the U. S. Government (USG).

As you and I have learned from our respective conversations with Mr. Richard Bissell, the assassination program in which he was involved was on a separate "track" from the official USG program being directed by [REDACTED] of the Western Hemisphere Division; and I have no information concerning Mr. Nixon's knowledge of, or participation in this effort. As I noted, the CIA personnel principally responsible for planning the anti-Castro operation expressed strong resentment that they were not made aware of the plan to "waste" Castro. It was their opinion that they were better equipped for such a task than the Mafia types, but the Agency's official anti-Castro effort did not include an assassination effort against any of the Cuban leaders.

- 2 -

In response to another of your questions, by no stretch of the imagination can Mr. Nixon be considered to have been "the architect of the Bay of Pigs." There is no denying, however, that the Vice President had great interest in the Agency's progress in organizing the ouster of Castro; and there was a recurrent offer from the Vice President to lean on any other Agencies of the USG which were recalcitrant about supporting CIA's efforts. There is no evidence that the Agency ever drew on this account.

STATINTL In terms of the anti-Castro effort, Nixon was particularly concerned about the Agency's plans to organize the anti-Castro Cubans living in the U. S. into an effective body which might assist in the overthrow of Castro. In this concern, as pointed out in Howard Hunt's book, Give Us This Day, the Vice President was also being pressured by William Pawley to review the qualifications of various of the most conservative of the exile spokesmen such as Antonio Rubio Padilla and Mario Garcia. At the same time, Pawley was frequently at odds with the Agency on the same topic, the result being that either J. C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, or the CIA Chief of the [REDACTED] would be required to confer with General Cushman concerning the handling of Mr. Pawley. Pawley, incidentally, was a major contributor to the Republican party. In fact, Mr. Nixon probably was first made aware of Howard Hunt following the introduction of Hunt to General Cushman in July 1960

STATINTL [REDACTED]

During the period of the anti-Castro meetings in question, Vice President Nixon displayed great concern about U. S. economic interests in Cuba, including the protection of U. S. investments; but at the same time, he was exceedingly interested in the possible imposition of economic sanctions to disrupt the Cuban government and force the overthrow of Castro.

There is no question that Mr. Nixon was thoroughly aware of the plans in progress or being put into practice -- propaganda efforts in particular -- by the CIA to carry out the official policy of the USG to force Fidel Castro out of office. Based on the available evidence, however, he did not originate, initiate, or interfere with the operations against Castro which were being mounted under the direction of CIA in the period from January to November 1960. From November 1960 -- and even in the month or two preceding the election -- the Nixon-Cushman concerns over Cuba apparently were dissipated by the Presidential campaign and the subsequent defeat.

One final item on which we touched briefly was that of the famous TV debate during the 1960 presidential campaign in which Kennedy urged U. S. support for programs designed to oust the Castro government. Nixon, although fully knowledgeable that such plans were well underway, argued against the Kennedy position. Remember that this was still in the period prior to CIA's decision to shift the anti-Castro effort from guerrilla warfare to amphibious invasion, and the possibility of plausible denial still existed. Had he done other than he did, Nixon would either have had to agree with Kennedy or reveal that the U. S. was already heavily involved -- Catch 22 was it not?

I believe this is the substance of my notes and for purposes of your documentation, it would be agreeable if you wish to refer either to this letter from me as the CIA Historian or to your conversation of 27 February with me as the CIA Historian. Even though we disagree, I did enjoy our session; and I wish you good progress on your new biography. Which reminds me .. Thank you very much for your offer of the Jefferson biography, but as an Agency employee I truly would prefer that you not forward it.

Sincerely yours,



STATINTL

Dr. Jack B. Pfeiffer
CIA Historian
203 Key Building
Washington, D. C. 20505

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7D02, Hqs.

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NO.

DDA 78-0894

DATE

3 March 1978

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DATE

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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